

HOUSE JOINT MEMORIAL 40

47TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - SECOND SESSION, 2006

INTRODUCED BY

Miguel P. Garcia

FOR THE LEGISLATIVE HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE

A JOINT MEMORIAL

SUPPORTING THE DECISION OF THE SECRETARY OF HEALTH TO ALLOCATE FUNDS FOR ABSTINENCE-ONLY SEX EDUCATION TO GRADES SIX AND BELOW AND PROVIDE COMPREHENSIVE SEX EDUCATION TO GRADES SEVEN AND HIGHER.

WHEREAS, women of color comprise over half of all New Mexican women and are faced with disparities in access to health care and health education and information necessary to make informed decisions about their own health needs; and

WHEREAS, approximately forty-five percent of all pregnancies in New Mexico are unintended, about one-half of women with unintended pregnancies had not been using contraception and nearly eighty percent of the unintended pregnancies occur among young women between the ages of fifteen and seventeen; and

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1           WHEREAS, the teen birth rate in New Mexico is the third-  
2 highest in the nation and the number of mothers ages fifteen  
3 through nineteen is thirty-eight percent higher than the number  
4 of teen mothers in that age group nationwide, indicating that  
5 one out of every six pregnant women in New Mexico is a  
6 teenager; and

7           WHEREAS, New Mexico also has one of the highest rates of  
8 sexually transmitted diseases among teens in the nation, and  
9 latina teens are less likely than other teens to be informed  
10 about birth control, sexually transmitted diseases and human  
11 sexuality; and

12           WHEREAS, eighty percent of New Mexicans agree with the  
13 statement "sex education programs should focus on how to avoid  
14 unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases,  
15 including HIV and AIDS since they are such pressing problems in  
16 America today"; and

17           WHEREAS, ninety percent of New Mexicans believe that  
18 teaching sex education to high school students is appropriate,  
19 and nearly eighty percent believe that teaching sex education  
20 to middle school students is appropriate; and

21           WHEREAS, Governor Bill Richardson dedicated an entire  
22 month to increasing awareness and educating teens about  
23 pregnancy prevention, yet no funds have been spent to  
24 facilitate this effort;

25           NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE

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1 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the decision of the secretary of  
2 health to allocate funds for abstinence-only sex education for  
3 grades six and below and the effort to provide comprehensive  
4 sex education to grades seven and above be supported; and

5 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that increased funding be provided  
6 for sex education on evidence-based teen pregnancy prevention  
7 strategies; and

8 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this memorial be  
9 transmitted to the secretary of health.

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